

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7229

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MPOL, SF, WA, AO

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN AIRBORNE ATTACK ON ANGOLA

REF: CAPE TOWN 897 (NOTAL),

1. SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENSE MINISTER ISSUED A STATEMENT AT 2300 LOCAL MAY 4 ANNOUNCING THAT, AS A RESULT OF SWAPO BUILDUP IN SOUTHERN ANGOLA, INTIMIDATION AND MURDER IN NAMIBIA, AND RECENT BORDER VIOLATIONS, "A LIMITED MILITARY OPERATION AGAINST SWAPO FORCES HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT OVER THE BORDER." MINISTER'S STATEMENT GAVE NO DETAILS OF THE OPERATION, BUT SAG HAS, ACCORDING TO OUR MEDIA CONTACTS, AUTHORIZED PUBLICATION OF ANGOP REPORT MONITORED IN LISBON AND A REUTERS NEWS STORY

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THAT AN ATTACK WAS LAUNCHED AGAINST CACINGA (OR CASSINGA), APPARENTLY NEAR SA DA BANDIERA, AT 0600, MAY 4. WE HAVE NOT YET SEEN THOSE REPORTS, BUT ACCORDING TO OUR MEDIA SOURCES, ANGOP STATED THAT, FOLLOWING HEAVY BOMBING ATTACK, "WAVES OF TROOPS" WERE LANDED AT NAMIBIAN REFUGEE CAMP POPULATED BY HUNDREDS OF CIVILIANS, MAINLY OLD MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN. REUTERS STORY REPORTEDLY REFERS TO "WAVES OF PLANES" AND

PARATROOPERS. NO INDICATION WHETHER THE OPERATION IS STILL IN PROGRESS. ASIDE FROM THE MINISTER'S STATEMENT, SAG AUTHORITIES ARE SAYING NOTHING.

2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF DEFENSE MINISTER'S STATEMENT:

QUOTE: "AS A RESULT OF THE OMINOUS BUILDUP OF SWAPO FORCES IN SOUTHERN ANGOLA AND THE EXTENSIVE CAMPAIGN OF INTIMIDATION OF THE LOCAL INHABITANTS AND THE MURDER OF POLITICAL LEADERS IN SOUTH WEST AFRICA, AS WELL AS THE LARGE NUMBER OF BORDER VIOLATIONS DURING THE PAST FEW WEEKS, A LIMITED MILITARY OPERATION AGAINST SWAPO FORCES HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT OVER THE BORDER. THE LIMITED OPERATION WAS EMBARKED ON AFTER LARGE NUMBERS OF HEAVILY ARMED SWAPO TERRORISTS RECENTLY CROSSED THE BORDER, ATTACKED OUR FORCES IN OVAMBO AND FLED BACK TO SAFETY IN ANGOLA. THE RUACANA POWER STATION WAS ALSO FIRED ON AND THE BUILDING EXTENSIVELY DAMAGED. AFTER THE ATTACK, THE LATEST SINCE SWAPO INTENSIFIED ITS HOSTILITIES, WE WERE FORCED TO RESORT TO FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS. I TRUST THE LIMITED OPERATION WILL LEAVE THOSE WHO WISH TO THREATEN US UNDER NO ILLUSIONS. WE HAVE ALREADY LEANED OVER BACKWARDS TO SEEK THE SOLUTION ALONG OTHER LINES AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO IN THE INTERESTS OF PEACE IN THIS SUBCONTINENT. BUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT CAN NO LONGER ALLOW WITH SELF RESPECT EMERGENCY CALLS FROM PEACEFUL LEADERS TO REMAIN UNANSWERED. WE HAVE A MORAL DUTY TOWARDS THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA AND CANNOT SIT SILENTLY AND WITH FOLDED HANDS AND SEE HOW PEACEFUL CITIZENS

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AND LEADERS OF THIS REMOTE AREA ARE MURDERED, ASSAULTED, KIDNAPPED AND THREATENED AND INTIMIDATED BY OTHER METHODS OF TERRORISM. I HAVE IN THE PAST WHILE REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT MILITARY BASES WILL NOT BE MADE AVAILABLE TO TERRORISTS IN SOUTHERN ANGOLA, BUT THIS APPARENTLY HAS FALLEN ON DEAF EARS. END QUOTE.

NELSON

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